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O R A T I O N :

DELIVERED JULY 4th, 1836,

BEFORE THE

S O C I A L U N I O N S O C I E T Y

O F A M H E R S T C O L L E G E .

align
BY E. H. KELLOGG,

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A MEMBER OF THE SOCIETY.

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O R A T I O N .

It is not to be supposed that American citizens of any class, are indifferent to the Fourth of July. It does not become them to suffer any occupation, or any multiplicity of business, to hush up the story that the Anniversary calls to mind. The more deeply and profitably we are engrossed in present pursuits, the more earnestly are we called upon, by the common impulses of gratitude, to remember on this day our fathers. While the aspect of our wide country so richly abounds with tokens of plenty and the signs of happiness, a dutiful regard for them calls upon the husbandman to stay his plough in the furrow, the mechanic to leave his tools untouched, the student to quit his study, the manufacturer to permit the hum of the spindle and the play of the loom to cease, the tradesman to close his doors, and the sailor-boy to set his stars and stripes fluttering on high to every breeze that sweeps the ocean ; in honor of the birth-day of the nation.

The tide of prosperity is fast carrying the nation away from the scenes of its infancy, and we should seize upon the lessons of the Great Epoch, and bear them on with us triumphantly above the flood, for our own safety and the good of coming generations. How fast are the men of those times dropping away ! How few of us now have an aged grandsire who ' listed during the war,' whose eye we may behold rekindle with its ancient fire as his voice trembles with the stirring story ! More

and more thrilling comes every knell that announces the departure of another spirit of the Old Revolutionary Army. Like children watching the breathings of a dying father, the nation feels that every peal brings nearer and nearer the aching void. Still the ~~revived~~^{men} survivors, tottering over the grave even, look out upon our happy country, and thank God that their own eyes rest upon a scene far outrunning their flightiest hopes indulged in those times when hope was the only indulgence. And how happy are these illustrious few, if they can interest the young, busy, thoughtless American in the scenes that tried them so faithfully ! Ah ! the grey-headed old men still speak of the nineteenth of April, and the seventeenth of June, without mentioning the year. They suppose that their sons must feel as they feel ; must we say that they are mistaken ? Not a soldier in the war, but knew that it was the hope alone of bringing the blessings of liberty to every door that nerved each arm throughout the protracted contest ; and he might well expect that those who were to reap the fruits, would bear his deeds in grateful remembrance. The greater and happier we become as a nation, the greater is our debt of gratitude. Our population is now about five fold, and our wealth probably thirty fold, as great as they were in 1780, and the change only attests the value of the institutions founded by our fathers. However fast we may settle our lands, however incessant may be the tide of immigration, however often we may double the 'Old Thirteen,' we shall not escape the protection of those institutions. As the waters when they roll into the sea, are under the same name, so are we under the same great shield. Every American son should know to whom and for what he is so deeply indebted. Every village and hamlet should know, that every other village and hamlet in the world are not as happy as themselves. The blood of our fathers is not satisfied with the thank-offerings of those who stand upon the ground they trod ; it cries to the prosperous millions beyond the mountains, that, as they journey

up in ceaseless succession those great arms of the Mississippi, with which she grasps the roots of the Rocky Mountains, and there under the over-shadowing wings of peace, plant the happy abodes of civilization; they will awaken the mountain echoes with their morning guns, and pour the songs of freedom over their ocean-like prairies, on every return of the Great Anniversary Festival.

It were for the good of the patriotism, the liberty, the morality of the nation, if all its citizens were to suffer the noise and the passion that wealth and prosperity has introduced to die away with the going down of the preceding sun, and rise on the morn of the Fourth with hearts full of gratitude to God, and that band, not of military, but citizen heroes, who through so much expense of treasure, amount of suffering, and profusion of blood, were permitted to achieve our Independence. Let them also sieze upon the fleeting incidents of those eventful times, as they escape from those tongues, coming alas! too fast under the seal of eternal silence, and fix them on the page of the history of Liberty in this country, with a brightness and precision, that shall carry gladness to the hearts of all her future worshippers. We intend that chronologists shall not have so much debateable ground about the time of the origin of the free states of modern times, as those of ancient times; the Grecian states, viz. one thousand years.

If it is the duty of all American citizens to become thus interested in the early condition of the country, it may be reasonably expected that those who may be supposed to be better acquainted with subjects of historical interest, will give that of the Revolution the first place in their minds. If the principles of the American Revolution are the ones destined to prevail over the world, it is time they were lifted into view, as if in the arch of the sky, in their original beauty, and matchless integrity. Those principles never have, under the light of any events, and never will, under any combination of circumstances,

reveal so distinctly their benign features, as in the blaze itself of the Revolution. That lamp should light them to the eyes which shall seek them for all time to come. For it is hazardous nothing to say that future ages will look back upon the history of the quarter of a century between 1765 and 1790 with an intenser gaze than upon that of any other twenty-five years that the flight of time has revealed. True, those times will have gone far, they are retreating fast into the dimness of distance ; but the men who acted in those scenes are coming forth, they shall come forth, as the stars when day departs, into brighter and bolder relief. It were strange if, with such illustrious and immortal founders, and in a day of such light and knowledge, the infancy of the nation did not shine in the bright light of history, and her storehouse of recollections were not well supplied.

We are no longer bound to pay undivided praise to little old Attica. Though we acknowledge her Athena, and promise always to call her Queen in letters and the arts ; yet the world looks to us for models in erecting the temples of liberty. A modern Greece has sprung from the wilds of America, not without her heroic exploits, not without her scenes of Epic grandeur, not without her adornments of civilization. While therefore we ring our changes on Marathon and Thermopyle,

The battle-fields where Persia's victim horde
First bowed beneath the brunt of Hella's sword ;

let us consider the Marathons and Thermopyles that rise full oft to view from the heights of Abraham to southern Charleston, embracing in their blood-stained bosoms, the bones of heroes who met the Persian, not only in a single fight, but who defended their soil against him for seven years. And when we allow ourselves to be thrilled, transported, caught up, by the victorious power of that tongue that

Shook the Arsenal, and fulmined over Greece,
To Macedon and Artaxerxes' throne ;

Let us give ear to the trumpet blasts of our mother tongue as they come over our plains and among our hills from the breath of an Otis, a Henry, an Adams, and a Lee. Or if we would listen to him,

Who firmly good in a corrupted state,
Against the rage of tyrants stood
Invincible!

While he discourses of the probability of there being a God in Heaven; let us turn and see the head of a great nation, civil and military, trusting in Providence for the issue of a righteous cause.

But it is yielding but halting praise to the memory of our forefathers, to confess ourselves gratified with the valor, patience in suffering, and love of liberty they displayed; or to amuse ourselves in comparing them with other characters in history. 'T is not enough to turn a listless gaze upon the barren order of occurrences during the Revolution. The picture and the principles of that great drama should appear enstamped upon the heart of every American, at home and abroad, both now and forever; and ere that takes place, those entablatures must be warmed by the heart of her fires. Let the mind gain 'a countermarch of time' and notice the events as they arise,—when the petitions began to lift their suppliant voices to the royal ear against the portentous change in the colonial policy at the close of the Old French War, when those voices grew louder upon the royal refusal of relief, when those same voices came upon that same royal ear in the harsher tones of remonstrance against the asserted right 'to bind us in all cases whatsoever,' when odious laws once repealed, were re-enacted, and Americans began to pledge their faith to rely upon their own soil, already becoming dear to them, for sustenance and comfort, when they found detachments of the British standing army quartered amongst them, when a wicked and revengeful enactment shut up one of our

most important seaports, challenging the united resistance of the continent, when the industrious citizens began to look about for means of defence, and the war-cry ran through the whole country; in short, when the mighty fleets of Great Britain floated her deadly armies up to our peaceful coasts, throwing the disciplined hordes into all our great cities to riot, plunder, and kill, and pouring their destructive thunder into our weak defences, while the glittering ranks of the British veteran and plaided Highlander are dashing off, in bold manœuvres, under the eager lion to subdue the rebel colonists, the mercenary German stealing his night marches, the 'blue-eyed Brunswickers' threading the northern wildernesses to cut off New England from the sister colonies, the plumed savage darting down from the mountain with the scalping knife, or springing from the valley with his tomahawk; let also the question be asked, if this chivalry of the European wars and American barbarity can be stayed by the few resolute yeomanry repairing to the meagre lines of the American army, the husband with knapsack and musket leaving his weeping wife and staring little ones scarcely provided with the necessaries of life, the son breaking away from his widowed mother and tearful sisters, to go and die where his father died, every town, village, and family most beseechingly called upon to furnish heavy contributions and enlistments for the army; every soldier fighting on unpaid, except by the useless securities of the poor continental Congress, still obeying the repeated calls of his beloved Washington, and that sentiment that no terrors of earth shall shake in his heart, the love of liberty:—more than all, let the ear be given to the tones of the great controversy as they ring across the waters, while the declarations of covetous power, are triumphantly met by the denouncers of unconstitutional taxation, while the ambitious pretensions of the cunning English Cabinet are boldly exploded by the unheard of statesman of America, while asking grows into demand and refusal into defiance, until the menacing thunders of St. Stephens

and the spirit-moving cries for truth and justice from Fanueil Hall, from Congress Hall, and from Williamsburgh, meet in angry tumult above the ocean ; the battling of the antagonist principles of the Old and New World.

It is thought by some an objection to the exercises usually had on these occasions, that they tend to keep alive unfriendly feelings towards the mother country. The spontaneous inclination of the national feeling should not be checked by such a scruple. Besides, appropriate commemorations of the exploits of our fathers are nowise inconsistent with the purest sentiments of amity and courtesy towards England. The untutored feeling of the English nation, ere it was warped by misrepresentation and inflamed to resentment by ministerial appeals, was undoubtedly in favor of the American cause. The reproach of those measures that drove us into the arms of independence, falls, not on the English nation, but upon a few men then in power, whose sentiments, we are justified in saying, have always leaned too much towards that line of policy by which they attempted to ruin our prosperity. We may be pardoned then, if we do occasionally, through indirect means, send through our well known neighbors' bosoms, the old unpleasant sensation. But this class of the English people do not so much apprehend the revival of revolutionary hostility, as they fear the growing fame of institutions in dangerous proximity to their own. Americans should not become propagandists. The only way in which their institutions will operate effectually upon the world, is through the happiness with which they are seen to clothe the people. But it becomes Americans to see to it, that the vulgar prejudices of the old world do not decry them prematurely. I know of no sentiment of courtesy that requires the friends of American institutions to bow deferentially to the lumbering trumpery heaped up by feudal barbarism, to the eternal annoyance of liberty. And while we would not attempt to force any influence upon the anti-republican states, we are bound to vindicate

cate our character and just fame ; to set forth the true nature of our institutions, before crowned heads as well as the lowly born. If this be done, we need not fear for the result. France, Spain, Portugal, the South American Republics, have they not turned and overturned, and struggled, some of them, in seas of blood for the priceless heritage that we possess in comparative security ?

Let Americans then fear not to rejoice on the return of the day in which they escaped from colonial vassallage, because Felix may tremble. The Tory party in England ought to know that it is fit on such occasions, to help to consign their course of policy to a damning fame. The dependencies of Great Britain have always received oppression at their hands. The unworthy selfishness, the life-blood of the party, ever impelled them on to desperate undertakings to gratify a few at home at the expense of the many abroad. Do they want proof? Let them listen to the wailing of millions, as it booms up from the deep interior of India ; the victims of pillage, extortion, and sometimes, the besom of war. Lo ! too the meagre arm of Ireland, upraised for ages in touching, though useless, petition to be relieved from the desolation that envious, ungenerous, cruel laws have carried over her beautiful isle. Above all, see the ruinous system that they attempted to impose on colonial America ; though against the loud, incessant, and eloquent remonstrances of the confessedly great and good men of the English nation. So bold, so unexpected, were their odious measures ; that Americans were not more alarmed for their liberties, than surprised that such men should be at the head of the nation, and that such folly should be put into their counsels. But the tables were turned against them. And may we not suppose that, were our fathers amongst us, they would deem it a fit occasion to rejoice that the principles for which they contended, are not only working a sure progress in the institutions of the mother country, but that they promise ere long, in their trium-

phant career, to bless their brethren in England with the full possession of their long, long, lost rights.

But without balancing consequences, we know that such a debt of gratitude never rested upon a people, as upon us. To discharge that debt, is right in the eyes of the universe. And we feel it to be any thing but a compliment to our character, to suppose that we are so dead to the noblest feeling that adorns humanity, as to fail in its discharge for fear of some collateral evil arising from its misinterpretation. Men, not so worthy as our fathers, are embalmed in our memories. Exploits, of less interest to humanity than the Revolution, receive our continued regard. If the civilized world has ever paid its tribute of admiration to the Spartan 'three hundred' who wished the monument attesting their fall, might only say to the traveller, 'Go; passenger, tell at Sparta that we died here in obedience to her laws;' laws, which, while they reared the promising child into a bold, lion-hearted, soldier, took the weak one from the arms of its mother and threw it to the wild beasts on Taygetus;—if the English people still gaze with rapture on the consecrated banners of Cressy and Agincourt, and glow with pride at the names of Nile and Trafalgar; how should we cling to the memory of our fathers who fought, not because they had been educated to fight; who bled, not to boast of their scars; who marched, not because they were commanded by an unseen power for unknown reasons; who died, not because they had learned to be reckless of death; but who fought because they could not be oppressed by foreign legislation; because they wanted a free home for their wives and children, because they hoped, though many must fall, some might survive; and because they chose to meet the contest for liberty when it offered, and not shuffle it off on to us their children.

On the twelfth of June Gen. Gage has declared the whole province of Massachusetts Bay to be in a state of rebellion, but invites the people to return to their allegiance, and offers his

Majesty's most gracious pardon to all who will receive it, 'excepting from the benefit of such pardon' says the proclamation 'Samuel Adams and John Hancock, whose crimes are of too flagitious a nature to admit of any other consideration than that of condign punishment.' And is this so? Has Massachusetts found reason to rebel against England whose cause she but yesterday so cheerfully espoused, and whose arms she sustained with her blood and treasure? Is she now ready to fight the mother country, with whose troops she lately marched, shoulder to shoulder, a greater proportion of her citizens than France poured out at the call of her Napoleon? Will not this rebellious member of the family be immediately opposed by those distinguished leaders, Putnam, Stark, Gates, Montgomery, Lee, Washington, who have carried the British arms triumphantly against the Frenchman and Indian, from the St. Lawrence to the Gulf of Mexico?

This proclamation was issued about two months after the affair at Lexington and Concord. That occurrence had convinced the people that to be vigilant, and ready, was their only safety. Gen. Gage having learned that a few military stores are collected together eighteen or twenty miles from Boston, bethinks himself that it will be a pleasant excursion for seven or eight hundred of his stately grenadiers, to run out under cover of night, destroy the stores, and in the morning, march back to Boston in their blazing regimentals, to the great admiration of the much surprised inhabitants. And indeed what is likely to defeat the well-planned expedition? Officers have been sent out on the roads to cut off all possible communication of the plan to the country towns. Darkness throws her mantle over city and country. Late in the evening the gay regulars march out of the streets of Boston full of the soldier's anticipations. They move silently over the waters. They land in hushed stillness. See them glide along on the road past the houses, with wary tread and muffled drum. What now shall

prevent the destruction of those stores and perhaps the conflagration of the town ! Who will rescue those patriots of the Provincial Congress, now asleep in their beds at Lexington, and already named for the halter ! Oh ! might not an alarm be somehow given ? Yes, yes, the royal Governor's determination was well known before sunset. The whisper has run through the villages to Lexington. The alarm guns have spread the tidings. The bells have taken them up and rung them from the steeples around all the towns ; and the quick roll of the drum has already called the militia on to the lines in the streets of Lexington and Concord.

Those troops do commence their return march on the morning of the nineteenth, 'that glorious morn for America,' which they had fondly hoped would bring them into such high gusto with the gazing villagers. But it reveals to them spectators with quite another object in view than to gratify curiosity. They discover the unending ranks of a foe whose singular military arrangements they do not understand, and whose order of battle they cannot possibly comprehend. Thus unexpectedly perplexed, and very much impeded in their march by the wounded, and thinking continually of the one hundred comrades they have already left behind them dead in the road ; they would fain quicken their step ; the officers too would fain dismount and march along side of their war horses, and every now and then, when they think they have found the light-footed foe in an assailable condition, make the very useless effort to form a line for battle ; for say the British officers in their letters home ; 'we attempted to stop the men and form them two deep ; but to no purpose, the confusion rather increased than diminished. The rebels,' they continue, 'killed and wounded many of our troops by keeping up a deadly fire from behind walls, trees, ditches, and other ambushes. Those weary regulars having found safety in the arms of Lord Percy's reinforcement, gain with difficulty the heights of Charlestown by sunset, in good season,

if not to dine, yet to sup, with his Excellency and congratulate him upon the encouragement his Majesty's troops have received from their first onset upon the rebellious Yankees.

The Provincial Congress immediately despatched to Great Britain a statement of the rencountre, with depositions from eye-witnesses, showing that the British troops were clearly the aggressors; again enumerating their wrongs, and concluding their paper with the emphatic language; 'Appealing to heaven for the justice of our cause, we determine to die or be free.' The feelings of the people now demanded decisive measures. The Congress resolved at once that an army of thirteen thousand should be raised for the defence of the Province. And now the old dusty drums, that sixteen years before had called so cheerfully the British soldier and American militiaman together to the battle field on the North Western Frontier; are again heard rattling forth their merry summons among our hills, for every village company to repair to Boston, to 'the quick march step of liberty,'

That's good to fiddle, sing, or play,
And just the thing for fighting.

The gathered forces encamp in the environs of Boston. And now the foe will no more invade us. An attack will soon drive them from the city that Lord North calls 'the hot bed of sedition.' But on the left wing of our army is an eminence that commands the land communication with Charlestown: will not the safety of the inhabitants be secured if we take possession of that hill? That was Bunker's hill. The next morning the British beheld that eminence, within cannon-shot, capped with an entrenchment eight rods square and four feet high. Major General Howe and Brigadier General Pigot resolve to cross Charles River and dislodge the Americans posted there. They land hurriedly, and hasten at the eager call to form. They move with deliberate step along up the hill side, every eye on

the redoubt. The militiamen within wait in silence, their bosoms heaving more and more with emotion, as the foe approaches. They withhold their fire until they can pick out every officer and level their guns with certainty. They withhold it no longer. From the windows and roofs of the houses in Boston, thousands of people are looking on in breathless anxiety. And now two thousand citizens are rushing out from burning Charlestown on to the neighboring eminences that overlook the scene ; some weeping, some frantic, now turning their agonized countenances towards the growing flames ; and now on the scene of action, to know what lot next God has in store for them. The British, twice repulsed, are again called upon to form and repeat the attack. They do it. But those sons of the American soil are fighting, not from the recollection of their families, but from their presence. They know that those distressed women, and children, and old men around them, hold their breaths at every charge of the enemy ; that they feel every fire cut themselves to the heart. Will they yield then, as long as they have the means of defence ?

Fifteen days pass away and George Washington is on his way from Mount Vernon to take the lead of the army. The continental Congress, now in its second session, at Philadelphia, has thought it best, since the battles of the 19th of April and 17th June to take up a regular defence and have appointed a Commander in Chief. He is not from Massachusetts, the seat of the war, but every one speaks well of him and he has once been appointed Commander in Chief of all the Virginia forces. He comes escorted by very respectable volunteers, and is accompanied by the gallant Major General Lee, and the accomplished Mifflin. At Springfield, one hundred miles from Boston, a committee from the Provincial Congress meet him and attend him to Cambridge, where he receives the warm congratulations of the whole army ; and would undoubtedly be greeted with an animating salute if they had the gunpowder to tune the

cannon. The organization of the army is very difficult. But a small quantity of stores and military equipage are provided. The first fresh courage of the men has somewhat abated since the battles. The lines of the army stretch from Roxbury Neck around to Prospect Hill in front of Bunker's; a crescent of twelve miles. Can we support such an extent of line against any attempt of the enemy, now eight thousand strong? They hold all the waters around Boston, all Boston Bay, with their floating batteries and armed vessels; shall we not be flanked by forces thrown out upon any part of the coast? Shall we not give up the blockade and retreat where the Welsh Hills in Cambridge may cover our rear, and the army assume a more compact and defensible form? But a retreat will disappoint, dishearten, the people. They expect that at least no ground will be given to the invaders; that they will rather be driven from their strong hold if possible. Under these circumstances Gen. Washington would risk an attack but a council of general officers disapproves the measure. The last of December draws near when the time of the militia drafts expires. The army is to be disbanded and another recruited; the whole line of posts also to be maintained; within gunshot of the enemy. The new Commander from abroad, but great Washington, has performed no brilliant exploit to attach the body of the soldiery to him; he must contrive to induce them to reinlist. The enemy must not by any means learn the naked condition of our lines. The General feels the peril of his situation. Writing to Congress he says; 'To maintain a post within musket shot of the enemy, for six months together without ammunition; and at the same time to disband one army and recruit another within that same distance of twenty British regiments, is more probably than was ever attempted.'

On the seventh of June, about five months after the evacuation of Boston by the British, a member rises in his place in the Congress at Philadelphia, and, instructed so to do by the Virgin-

ia Assembly, offers a resolution declaring the colonies free and independant states. Are the care-worn countenances of those patriots, chosen for their wisdom from three millions of people, turned suddenly towards the member in surprise? Oh no, the great subject has weighed long and heavily on the minds of the most resolute. They have already corresponded for some time with members of the Provincial Legislature on this topic. They have held earnest conversation with each other for many a still hour of the night. They have foretold to each other that the course of the British ministry was fast preparing the people for this step. They have rejoiced to hear of the Virginia instructions. And their countenances tell of a deep, delightful, sensation thrilling each bosom as Mr. Lee pronounces the words of the resolution. Their hearts leap forth to welcome it : for they feel perplexed, having been one year in arms against Great Britian in the character of her subjects, and they fear the whole world must soon call them rebels ; they think too, that the mother country will treat with them on better terms as an independant nation than as repenting rebels ; they are afraid also that a part of the people have already received too deep injuries to forget, and will be liable to ill-advised risings, and to become the victims of some designing leader ; that the blood of those massacred at Lexington and Concord, and of the brave who fell at Bunker's hill, will not let them settle down as contended subjects ; that the blood of Warren, in his own words ' crying from the ground ' will startle them from their inglorious slumbers ; and they hope the measure, by opening free trade with all the world, will bring those important commercial places, now so impatient under non-importation and non-consumption covenants, more heartily to espouse their cause ; they think they could encourage the army with the prospect of ample funds from the public lands ; that they could form alliances with foreign nations ; and they are animated with the prospect of these colonies having their interests at their own disposal.

On the other hand the more moderate would pause. They cannot but start back sometimes when they attempt to scan the prospect that this step will unveil. The army of defence has now been out one year, and the enemy on the coast is as fearless as ever; the expedition we sent off so confidently against Canada, has entirely failed. Our Montgomery has fallen where he saw Wolf fall; more fleets and more armies are this moment on their way from Great Britain; the Howes in all probability will soon offer terms of some kind for reconciliation, if we do not fall in with them we know they are determined to send more fleets and more armies; their resources are inexhaustible, while our army is now alarmingly distressed, the service very materially impaired for want of pay; we can raise no taxes, that power rests in the hands of the colonial legislatures; still we have already issued paper to the alarming amount of five millions, giving our word that the colonies will redeem it in the proportion we assign them; they trust us now, but can we long keep up such unusual confidence; will they not fall out among themselves about this matter? The empirical experiments we made to regulate the prices of provisions have proved absurd; two or three colonies have signified their opposition to this measure by instructing their delegates here not to listen to it; dissatisfaction and distrust will grow with the growth of these burdens, and who can discover the end of them? We shall fall to pieces through division; the enemy will not fail to seize on this state of things to madly overrun the country; the chains of oppression will be drawn still tighter on our children, when we, who are thus leading the country on, shall have been taken and brought to an ignominious death on the scaffold: is it reasonable then, is it wise, is it right, in the name of heaven is it right, for gentlemen to say that our children will thank us for passing a resolution pregnant with such consequences? It was a great question; those great and good men felt their hearts oppressed with the sense of their situation. They reasoned, they weigh-

ed, they counceled together, they prayed to God. They indulged in no lightness of mind, in no flighty speeches. They felt that they could not

Charm ache with air, or agony with words.

Day after day passes away. Continued reflection proves favorable to the Resolution. Those members who, in debating upon the subject at first, had seemed to themselves to speak with halters about their necks, began to appear more cheerful. The sentiment of the nation seemed responding clearly to the resolution. The restrictive instructions were withdrawn from the delegates. The feeling verged towards unanimity, and after twentyseven days of such deliberation, they gave their hands and their hearts for the resolution. This is the return of that day. Who does not love to be, who does not thank God that he is, in its light ; the light of its sixtieth dawn, and America what she is ; free, prosperous, powerful, happy, honored all over the world !

Six days after the declaration of Independence, the eyes of the nation were turned towards Sandy Hook off New York. Admiral lord Howe, Commander of all British ships on the American station, was there standing up to the Narrows with his proud fleet, as if already on the wings of victory. The British attacking army was twenty-four thousand strong. Gen. Washington, by the advice of Congress and the general officers had agreed to try to keep possession of New York, manifestly the destined rendezvous of the enemy. The Declaration had been read to the army with their most hearty consent. Still the eye of the General quickly discovers alarming difficulties in the way. The passages of the North and East rivers, being so important, and the islands between him and the enemy, must be defended. He must divide his forces so as to man a line of posts stretching fifteen miles, retaining enough notwithstanding to repel any attack on the city. There is great need of arms ; two thousand men being in camp without them. The

States have not sent in their expected quotas of troops. The militiamen are unpractised. Brooklyn, opposite New York, must be defended; 'and in case of an attack,' says the General to Congress; 'I can promise myself but one more battalion.' He knows he will be attacked. And his own never-failing prudence whispers regret at the situation into which he has suffered himself to lead the army. In his addresses to the soldiers under the momentary expectation of an attack, he betrays more misgivings as to the result than at any other time during the war. Writing to Congress, he says; 'the appeal may not terminate so happily as I could wish, yet the enemy will not succeed in their views without considerable loss. Whatever advantage they may gain, will I trust cost them dear.' On the 26th of August, the British land under cover of their ships on the southwestern extremity of Long Island. They form in three divisions under Clinton, Grant, and D'Hester; and the noise of preparation reaches the Americans. The sun of the 27th arose, but the night had seen important movements on the part of the British. I pass over that day. The anguish of that blow did not wring the heart of Washington with more pain, than it filled the hearts of his countrymen with alarm. More than one thousand killed; more than another thousand taken prisoners, with one Major and two Brigadier Generals. The troops looked about like men in trouble, and began to quit the ranks and march home by large parties, sometimes by whole regiments. Still by the advice of the general officers, the General resolves to hold New York. The enemy is in possession of the East river and can land forces above the city. Detachments must be stationed as far up as White Plains to prevent invasion. In a few days notwithstanding, five ships are seen moving up the river without feeling a fire from the Americans, and under their cover three miles above the city, four thousand troops land under the brave, the too well known, General Clinton. And is the American army so soon to be cut to pieces? The American

lines here, however, are capable of defence. But the men are apprehensive that some of the unintelligible manœuvres of the 27th will be repeated. As the ships begin to throw in their fire they take up their retreat for New-York. They meet two brigades despatched to their assistance. They take the panic and all flee towards the city. They meet the Great Washington, whom they always love to obey, but whom, they cannot obey now. Those earnest calls to them, must be, are, disregarded. We hear, my friends, that a great occurrence now took place : that Washington, Washington, faltered and trembled on the brink of despair. It was then, surely, it *was* a time that tried men's souls.

A few days pass away with one defeat succeeding another, until fort Washington and Lee with two thousand men and very valuable stores, fall into the hands of the enemy. Behold ! the American General, with his army fleeing precipitately through the Jerseys, before Cornwallis. The soldiers and the people seize fast upon the proffered pardon of the Howes. As the fleeing three thousand escape from a village, they discover the vanguard of the pursuing army enter it. They strain for the Delaware. They leap it, and seize with them as they go, the boats from the grasp of the enemy. But will this pleasant river check the impetuous race of the British army for the national capitol ? Ah ! but misfortunes are indeed sometimes blessings in disguise. With the recuperative energies of despair, and on the quick wings of new-born hope, the defeated fly into the midst of the enemy, and achieve the brilliant exploits of Trenton and Princeton. The confidence of the country is at once reassured. Congress thank the General and the whole army. I have no time to inquire how this great contest will finally terminate. But methinks that the hopes of this nation of patriots must at last be fully realized.

For Freedom's battle once begun,
Bequeathed from bleeding sire to son,
Though baffled oft, is ever won.

In May, 1787, the Convention met at Philadelphia, to revise the articles of the federal government. The horrors of war had retired from our borders and left the declaration of Independence most fully sustained, but no crisis in the Revolution ever called louder for the best efforts of the nation than the present arduous duties of peace. Those men who had encircled their brows with civic wreaths in councils during the war, gathered together there with their experience. Those, who had surrounded their names with the brightest glories of arms, had also come there as lawgivers. The beloved leader of the armies of the Revolution presided over the assembly. But the alarming fact was soon discovered, that the great variety of conflicting interests of a country so extended, rendered it extremely doubtful, whether even with their experience, with their wisdom, and with their patriotism, a satisfactory system could be devised. But they were again permitted to achieve great things, They sent the Federal Constitution to the States for adoption. ‘That union had its origin in the necessities of disordered finance, prostrate commerce, ruined credit.’ Under its creating energies, we have arisen, as we have; I cannot tell how, or to what height even. Look around on our great country. Words are useless. The eye must look, and look, and look, and yet have but a poor conception of the reality. Here in our own beloved country, where a few years ago, raged a protracted war for national existence, all the records of national prosperity have been surpassed, and the fancies of a More and a Plato found to be scarcely beyond the truth. When we cast our eyes back, we are astonished at the mighty strides we have taken; when we cast them forward we are amazed at the prospect that seems to crowd on the vision. True we are not without difficulties, present and prospective; but they are evils inherent in the system. It brought tears of sorrow from our fathers, that they were not permitted, by the counsels of an all-wise Providence, to preserve the plan free from them. Let us not, on this joyful day, by complaining

of these evils, arraign their wisdom ; or, by indulging in dismal forebodings, start afresh the closed fountains of their grief. Let us rather, by opening our hearts to the great lessons inculcated by their actions, learn from them how to bear cheerfully, prudently, wisely, with the difficulties from which they could not relieve us. Let nothing dampen the ardor of our gratitude to those men who beheld their nation a dependant province, and permitted their children to behold it, in sixty years, powerful, prosperous, honored in every land and on every sea ; the freest, the happiest, the best land for freemen, that the sun, in his rounds, has ever been able to find.

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